



DC COMMISSION ON THE ARTS & HUMANITIES

**FULL COMMISSION MEETING  
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 25, 2008  
9:00 – 5:30 PM  
GREATER WASHINGTON URBAN LEAGUE**

MINUTES

Commissioners

Anne Ashmore-Hudson, Chair  
Rhona Wolfe Friedman, Vice Chair  
Rebecca Fishman  
Rod Little  
Rogelio Maxwell  
Lavinia Wohlfarth  
Gloria Nauden  
Maurice Shorter  
Michael Sonnenreich  
Lou Hill Davidson

Staff

Lionell Thomas, Interim Director  
Lisa Richards, Interim Deputy Director  
Dolores Kendrick, Poet Laureate  
Catherine Cleary, Interim Grants Manager  
Rachel Dickerson, DC Creates Public Art Manager  
Joe Angel Babb, Arts Education Coordinator  
Moshe Adams, Grants Program Assistant  
Kendall Ladd, Interim Arts Ed. Coordinator  
Shyree Mezick, Program Assistant

I. Call to Order:

The meeting was called to order at 9:22am by Dr. Anne Ashmore-Hudson, Chair.

The Chair introduced Maudine Cooper, President and CEO of Greater Washington Urban League

II. Approval of Minutes:

Minutes from July 2008 were passed out to Commission members. Changes were noted.

It was moved by Commissioner Friedman to accept the July meeting minutes and seconded by Commissioner Sonnenreich.

\*Motion Carried

Unanimous

III. Director's Report:

The Interim Director, Lionell Thomas, recognized the naming of Gloria Nauden as the new Executive Director. He also introduced Catherine Cleary as the Grants and Legislative Manager and Moshe Adams as the Grants and Legislative Assistant.

The Interim Director also mentioned the success of Jazz Songs as part of the American Masterpieces program. Lisa Richards pointed out the considerable number of DC

musicians used for the workshops and the DC participants. The entire experience was a great success.

The Wilson Building art exhibition opening was a successful event attended by several Commission members. The Counsel was very appreciative of the event, especially Councilmember Vincent Gray.

The Green Team Initiative, spearheaded by DCCAH staff member Carell Kent, received a standing ovation when originally presented at the DC City Counsel meeting.

Lionell Thomas, Lisa Richards and Catherine Cleary attended the NASAA Conference in Chattanooga.

The public art master plan is a partnership program, which serves as the blueprint for public art for the next 10 years. The strategic master plan and strategic plan have not yet been approved.

The DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities' NEA application is due on October 2. A full application is due this year. The Commission does not expect any problems with future funding.

#### IV. Chair's Report:

The Chair noted Gloria Nauden as the new Executive Director beginning October 13, 2008.

The Chair introduced having full Commission meetings on the 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday of every other month and executive meetings on the alternating months. Any Commission member is allowed to attend but will not be able to vote. October will be an Executive Committee meeting and November will be the full Commission meeting. The Chair suggested that older Commission members take newer members under their wing.

Lavinia Wohlfarth and the Interim Director will represent the Commission at the Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation Board meeting.

In the future the Chair would like to see more basic market research for upcoming events (for example: Dance DC). Some of the information she suggested: a people count, the source of audience's knowledge of the event, wards of audience members. Dr. Ashmore Hudson wants to find out if the Commission marketing to voting, tax-paying residents and what wards are being overlooked if any.

The Commission has been accused of being rude when the Commission is actually being passionate. The Chair asks the Commissioners to be more accommodating and polite.

#### Discussion:

Grant writing – what constitutes acceptable discussion between Commission members during panels? To what extent does the Commission discuss and disagree in front of

panel representatives? Commissioner Davidson expressed the desire to respond to representatives between presentations. The Chair does not want to disagree in front of the panelists.

Commissioner Maxwell expressed concern about the quality of art and artistic works. He suggested the Commission encourage more artists to apply so the quality of work increases. He pointed out the visual arts exhibit at the Katzen Arts Center at American University. He expressed concern about the Commission's lack of focused outreach. Commissioner Little mentioned the outreach committee, which includes developing marketing initiatives.

#### V. Poet Laureate's Report:

Dolores Kendrick presented to the Commission at 2:17pm. She showed the Write On! advertisement for buses. There are 3 types in blue, red, and yellow. From 2000-2008 the Write On! Program collected over 2000 poems to put on the buses. These works will also be on the website, city website, and DCCAH website. The campaign will be launched at downtown at Metro offices. There will be announcements sent to all City and Commission members.

The Poet Laureate announced that she was invited to attend a poetry stage production of Women of Plums: Poems in the Voices of Slave Women – poetry as theatre- at the Phillips Exeter Academy.

#### VI. Funding Request—Kids Euro Festival:

The Chair introduced herself to Kimberley Heatherington of the French-American Cultural Foundation and the Cultural Attaché from France. Ms. Heatherington presented the Kids Euro Festival, a month-long festival which brings artists from the 27 member nations of the European Union to perform in DC Public Schools.

#### Discussion:

Commissioner Sonnenreich left for the discussion and vote. The Interim Director advised the funds could come from the set aside budget. The Interim Director pointed out that these are 2009 budget funds. The Kids Euro Festival would have to be reimbursed after the festival is done. The Chair recognized that the Kids Euro Festival was recommended to the Commission by the staff because the Festival DC deadline was missed.

#### Conclusion:

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Fishman and seconded by Commissioner Davidson that the commissioners approve the funding recommendations at \$30,000.

*Stipulation- The Commission has to have an advisory on their panel. Commissioner Lou Hill Davidson will be the representative along with Commissioner Michael Sonnenreich who is already involved with the project. The Commission also*

*requests individual invitations to the opening party and DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities marketing on all publicity*

\*Motion Carried

Unanimous

VII. Grant Program—City Arts Projects:

Interim Legislative and Grants Manager, Catherine Cleary, introduced Cynthia Gertsen as Director of DCAH Education. Ms. Gertsen stated that a total of 69 applications were submitted. The total amount of funds requested was \$1,169,802.70. One application was deemed ineligible before review. Of the 68 eligible applications reviewed, the total amount of funds requested was \$1,149,802.70 and the panel recommended funding for 49 applicants totaling \$780,930.70 based on their merit.

The panel made the following recommendations for policy and program improvements:

The development of new projects should present a plan that speaks to how applicants would achieve their goals.

The panel asked how applicants will track the attendance and the attendees of the project in lieu of free tickets/admissions.

Award ceremonies would indeed be available to receive funding through Festivals DC.

Discussion:

The Commission thanked Ms. Gertsen for her enthusiasm and willingness.

Commissioner Davidson asked about the funding cut off as cited in the transmittal letter. The Interim Director responded that only two grants can be funded to organizations through AEP, CAP, and FDC.

Conclusion:

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Wohlfarth that the Commissioners approve the funding recommendations as presented.

\*Motion carried

5 in favor; 2 abstentions

VIII. Grant Program - Folk & Traditional Arts:

Ebony Blanks introduced the panel representative, Tiffany Hill, and the first deadline for Folk and Traditional Arts Program. There were 11 applications in total and 3 were found to be ineligible.

Tiffany mentioned how strong the applicant pool was. The process went very smoothly.

Policy Recommendations:

1. The panel recommended that applicants be required to answer questions, question by question, in order to better compare applications.
2. The panel requested that first time applicants be required to attend a workshop that focuses on what would be expected of them by the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities.

Discussion:

Commissioner Davidson asked about the large number of dance applicants and why there were so few applicants overall. Ms. Blanks responded that the second deadline receives more varied applicants. Commissioner Davidson then inquired about the maximum grant amount to Folk and Traditional Arts Program. She suggested raising the amount to \$2000 in order to encourage more applicants.

Conclusion:

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Davidson and seconded by Commissioner Sonnenreich to approve the funding recommendations and raise the maximum grant amount to \$2000 for Folk and Traditional Arts grants.

\*Motion Carried

\*Unanimous

IX. Grant Program - UPSTART :

Interim Program Coordinator, Victoria Murray, introduced Ann Norton as the panel representative for UPSTART. Ms. Norton is the alternate representative. There were 8 organizations that applied and 6 recommended for funding.

Policy Recommendations:

The panel concluded that in the event that applicants request a lesser amount of funding for which they are eligible, the panel could grant them more funding by going through the organizations consultant.

There was confusion about the score sheet. They recommended that the staff include a panelist comment sheet or a sheet of comments that they could pull from.

Discussion:

The Commission noted that Jill Strachan is the executive director for two of the organizations applying for UPSTART funding.

Commissioner Davidson asked about the commercial aspect of the Prisons Foundation. They were informed that the selling of the artwork aids the artist and the organization. The organization's revenue streams were in question. The Prisons Foundation applied last year and received no funding. There were serious issues with their application.

Conclusion:

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Sonnenreich to approve the funding recommendations as presented.

\*Motion Carried

Unanimous

#### X. Grant Program – Grants-In-Aid:

The Chair welcomed Dr. Early. Lisa Richards introduced the Grants-In-Aid program. 67 applications received and the panel recommended 48 of those applicants for funding.

Dr. Early was very impressed with the staff at DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities. The panel had a very diverse selection of applicants and the panel itself was exceptional. He found the panel to be particularly civic minded. He commented on the intensity of the debate and the compromises that the panel made together. The merit of applications and the definition of merit were discussed (artistic merit first). All recommendations were unanimous. A few film specific organizations were recommended for funding. Dr. Early directed the Commission to the stipulations.

The panel made the following recommendations for policy and program improvements:  
Grouping of the major categorical institutions to fund and support varied arts and humanities organizations.

Arts business organizations should also be supported but probably are not included in this Commission. Lionell mentioned that the majority of large business development organizations are opposed to arts development.

#### Discussion:

Commissioner Friedman mentioned the desire to reconcile the funding efforts to provide more economic-based funding. Commissioner Davidson wondered if Dr. Early would be willing to create and develop workshops with like this.

Dr. Ashmore-Hudson reminded the Commission to recommend future panelists.

#### Conclusion:

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Little and seconded by Commissioner Fishman that the commissioners approve the funding recommendations as presented.

\*Motion Carried

Unanimous

#### XI. Grant Program – Artist Fellowship Program - Media:

Commissioner Rogelio Maxwell expressed his appreciation for Joe Angel Babb, the program coordinator, and Tory Petty from DC Scores, the panel representative. A total of

18 applications were submitted. The total amount of funds requested was \$85,000. The panel recommended funding for 10 applicants totaling \$50,000 based on their merit. Ms. Petty drew the Commission's attention to the recommendations.

#### Policy Recommendation

The panel suggested that applicants should submit a 2-page treatment to the panel. This a more professional approach for the artist but also represents the artist better to the panel.

The panel strongly suggested that the applicants' work sample should reflect their proposed project.

There should be limits on work samples. The panel suggested at least 2 minutes but no more than 5 minutes samples

The panel suggested a separate category for Interdisciplinary Media Arts. In some instances, the panel only got to see one piece/section of the project. The panel had difficulty ranking this applicant.

#### Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Sonnenreich and seconded by Commissioner Friedman to approve the funding recommendations as presented.

\* Motion passed

\*Unanimous

#### XII. Grants Program – Artist Fellowship Program – Visual Arts

Joe Angel Babb introduced the Artist Fellowship—Visual Arts funding recommendation and Mark Zuver, the panel representative. There were 65 total applications and 38 were funded. The funds requested were \$325,000 and funds allocated were \$190,000 based on merit.

The panel made the following recommendations for policy and program improvements:

Mark Zuver recommended that 20% of grants go to those over 65 to acknowledge their life of work. However, the panel was impressed with some of the new unknown artists and found them inspirational. The panel felt that young artists who apply for Artist Fellowship Program gained valuable experience. Mark suggested just a bit more balance with age as a factor.

#### Discussion

Commissioner Little questioned the panel's disagreement about the finished product of the applicants

#### Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Fishman and seconded by Commissioner Little that the commissioners approve the funding recommendations as presented.

\* Motion passed

\*Unanimous

#### XIII. Grants Program – Arts Education Projects:

Mr. Babb introduced the program and explained it to the Commission. There were 62 applications and 44 approved applicants. The amount of funds requested was \$1,499,835.06. The amount recommended for funding was \$850,000.

The Chair introduced herself and the Commission to Mr. Markey, the panel representative. Mr. Markey commented on the wealth of programming available to DC residents. The applications that stood out were the ones that addressed multiple needs within the community. The clearer applications were the ones that the panel was eager to fund. The panel was, for the most part, in agreement on most applications. Some applications were not clear as to the projects audience and focus. The panel had to try to figure out and answer questions about applications, which was reflected in their scores.

#### The panel made the following recommendations for policy and program improvements:

Panelists recommended a template to give to applicants to use as a guide to writing.

The panel suggested having two programs: curriculum based and project based each with different panelists.

#### Discussion

Commissioner Little, Commissioner Friedman, and Commissioner Sonnenreich questioned whether they could vote. The Commissioners with conflicts of interest did not vote on The Washington Ballet and The Ellington Fund.

#### Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Sonnenreich and seconded by Commissioner Fishman that the commissioners approve the funding recommendations as presented.

\* Motion passed

\*Unanimous

#### XIV. Grants Program – Public Art Building Communities

The Chair introduced herself and the Commission to Ms. Byron, panel representative. Rachel Dickerson introduced the project and the grant was explained to the Commission.



There were 12 Applicants, 8 recommended for funding. The total amount available for funding was \$249,751 and the amount recommended for funding was \$168,351.

Ms. Byron appreciated receiving the applications in plenty of time. Many panelists were able to visit the sites to see the artists' work. She commended her fellow panelists.

The panel made the following recommendations for policy and program improvements:

Applicants should provide pictures of their proposed sites.

Applicants should hire arts consultants.

The Commission should design a workshop to teach about DC consumer and regulatory affairs (zoning, permits, etc.) The panel suggested that fellow panelists could actually help with in this process. The panel is requested for officials to facilitate workshops to deliver their particular expertise.

Discussion

The Chair suggested hiring curators to help artists.

Conclusion

Following discussion, it was moved by Commissioner Sonnenreich and seconded by Commissioner Little that the commissioners approve the funding recommendations as presented.

\* Motion passed

\*Unanimous

XV. Public Art Projects – Florida/NoMa

Florida Avenue Underpass

Public Art Program Manager, Rachel Dickerson, introduced Liz Price, the NoMa BID representative. Rachel recommended that \$76,000 go toward funding the NoMa public art project. The work would involve working with the Department of Transportation. Ms. Price explained the need for public art to enliven and connect the area to Capitol Hill. The Commission asked several questions about the location itself. Commissioner Davidson asked particularly about the lighting of the area. Commissioner Shorter asked about the placement of the art. Ms. Byron responded that the art would not be in the actual tunnel. It will be on the external of the tunnel. Commissioner Davidson asked for clarification on Ms. Byron's relationship to NoMa. The Chair asked about the significance of that particular bridge opposed to a different underpass. Commissioner Wohlfarth added that this type of artwork would make a big difference in the success of this project. The Chair suggested holding on the vote until the Commission had a chance to view the actual site.

Discussion

The chair asked the Interim Director to reiterate the project's background. The developer donated \$50,000 to the DCCAH and asked for extra funds. Commissioner Davidson

expressed serious concern about becoming involved in this project due not knowing from whom the initial \$50,000 came. Commissioner Sonnenreich mentioned that the art does not solve the problem of the underpass. He feels that it will not make it any better for the pedestrians to use the path. Commissioner Wohlfarth suggested tabling the project and asking the developer and associates to further describe the project in order to flesh out the entire project.

The Chair requested the following steps:

To make the bid transparent to other companies

To vet any other developers

To inquire if other developers would like to give more funding

To ask if this is part of our master plan

#### Conclusion

The Chair moved to table this for now with the recommendation to go to a BID representative.

It was moved by Commissioner Sonnenreich and seconded by Commissioner Friedman to table the issue until further information can be provided.

\*Motion Carried

\*Unanimous

#### XVI. Old & New Business

The Canal Park/No/Ma public art project (previously voted on) has decided to redevelop the park. Public Art Manager, Rachel Dickerson recommended a new design instead of the old sculptures that the Commission already decided to fund. The Public Art Manager mentioned that the same artist will be used and the park would be redesigned in order to fit the budget. The new design would be more sustainable, more family-friendly and more affordable. The Executive Office of the Mayor has ordered this redesign.

Commissioner Sonnenreich excused himself for the additional discussion of Kids Euro Festival Due.

It was moved by Commissioner Friedman and seconded by Commissioner Maxwell that the award amount be increased to \$50,000.

\*Motion Carried

Unanimous

#### XVII. Adjournment

It was motioned by Commissioner Sonnenreich to adjourn. Commissioner Little seconded the motion. The meeting was adjourned at 3:45.

\*Motion Carried

Unanimous